

What is claimed is:

1. A file authentication requesting device that stores a computer program for requesting authentication of files in digital systems, the device comprising:

5 a confirmation request system that generates a request for a confirmation receipt from a third party authenticator authenticating the attributes of a file;

a transferring system that transfers attributes of at least one file to be authenticated to the third party authenticator from the device that requested the confirmation; and

10 a receiving system that receives the confirmation receipt comprising authenticated file attributes, after authentication by the third party authenticator;

wherein, at least one file authentication is received from the third party authenticator.

15 2. The file authentication requesting device of claim 1, in which the at least one file to be authenticated was received by the device as a file transfer from another device.

20 3. The file authentication requesting device of claim 1, in which an identification of at least one of the device or user of the device is transferred along with attributes of the at least one file to be authenticated.

4. The file authentication requesting device of claim 1, in which the authentication comprises digitally signing the confirmation receipt.

5. The file authentication requesting device of claim 1, in which the authentication comprises a unique digital characterization of file attributes by a postal authority.

5 6. A file authentication processing device that stores a computer program for processing requests for authentication of files in digital systems, the device comprising:

10 a receiving system that transfers attributes of at least one file to be authenticated to the third party authenticator from the device that requested the confirmation;

a processing system that processes a confirmation receipt, the processing comprising a unique digital characterization of the file attributes, assuring at least in part tampering and modification detection;

15 a sending system that sends the confirmation receipt comprising authenticated file attributes to the requesting device, after processing by the third party authenticator;

wherein, at least one file is authenticated by the third party authenticator.

20 7. The file authentication processing device of claim 6, in which an identification of at least one of the requesting device or user of the requesting device is transferred along with attributes of the at least one file to be authenticated.

25 8. The file authentication processing device of claim 6, in which the unique digital characterization comprises digitally signing at least the file attributes or the confirmation receipt.

9. The file authentication processing device of claim 6, in which the confirmation receipt incorporates at least the date and time of authentication, and an identification of at least the requesting device.

5 10. The file authentication processing device of claim 6, in which the unique digital characterization of file attributes comprises authentication by a postal authority.

10 11. A file authentication system comprising:  
an originating file authentication device originating a request for a confirmation receipt from a third party authenticator, and transferring attributes of at least one file to be authenticated to the third party authenticator;  
15 a confirmation request processing device for processing a confirmation receipt by the third party authenticator, the processing comprising a unique digital characterization of the file attributes, assuring at least in part tampering and modification detection;  
a transferring device for transferring the confirmation receipt comprising authenticated file attributes, after processing by the third party authenticator, to the device that requested confirmation;  
20 wherein, the third party authenticator authenticates the attributes of the at least one file as requested by the device.

25 12. The file authentication processing system of claim 11, in which an identification of at least the requesting device or user of the requesting device is transferred along with attributes of the at least one file to be authenticated.

13. The file authentication processing system of claim 11, in which the unique digital characterization comprises digitally signing at least the file attributes or the confirmation receipt.

5 14. The file authentication processing system of claim 11, in which the confirmation receipt incorporates at least the date and time of authentication, and an identification of at least the requesting device.

10 15. The file authentication processing system of claim 11, in which the unique digital characterization of file attributes comprises authentication by a postal authority.

16. A computer readable medium that stores a computer program for authentication of files in digital systems, the medium comprising:

15 a transferring source code segment that transfers attributes of at least one file to be authenticated to the third party authenticator from the device that requested the confirmation;

20 a processing source code segment that processes a confirmation receipt, the processing comprising a unique digital characterization of the file attributes, assuring at least in part tampering and modification detection;

a sending source code segment that sends the confirmation receipt comprising authenticated file attributes to the requesting device, after processing by the third party authenticator;

25 wherein, at least one file is authenticated by the third party authenticator.

17. The medium of claim 16, in which an identification of at least one of the requesting device or user of the requesting device is transferred along with attributes of the at least one file to be authenticated.

5 18. The medium of claim 16, in which the unique digital characterization comprises digitally signing at least the file attributes or the confirmation receipt.

10 19. The medium of claim 16, in which the confirmation receipt incorporates at least the date and time of authentication, and an identification of at least the requesting device.

20. The medium of claim 16, in which the unique digital characterization of file attributes comprises authentication by a postal authority.

15 21. A computer readable medium that stores a computer program for requesting authentication of files in digital systems, the medium comprising:

a confirmation request source code segment that generates a request by a device for a confirmation receipt from a third party authenticator authenticating the attributes of a file;

20 a transferring source code segment that transfers attributes of at least one file to be authenticated to the third party authenticator from the device that requested the confirmation;

25 a receiving source code segment that receives the confirmation receipt comprising authenticated file attributes, after processing by the third party authenticator;

wherein, at least one file authentication is received from the third party authenticator.

22. The medium of claim 21, in which the at least one file to be authenticated was received by the device as a file transfer from another device.

23. The medium of claim 21, in which an identification of at least one of the device or user of the device is transferred along with attributes of the at least one file to be authenticated.

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24. The medium of claim 21, in which the unique digital characterization comprises digitally signing the confirmation receipt.

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25. The medium of claim 21, in which the unique digital characterization of file attributes comprises authentication by a postal authority.

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26. A method for authenticating files in digital systems, the method comprising:

requesting a confirmation receipt from a third party authenticator by a device, transferring attributes of the at least one file to be authenticated to the third party authenticator by the device that requested the confirmation;

processing a confirmation receipt by the third party authenticator, the processing comprising a unique digital characterization of the file attributes, assuring at least in part tampering and modification detection;

transferring the confirmation receipt comprising authenticated file attributes, after processing by the third party authenticator, to the device that requested confirmation;

5           wherein the third party authenticator authenticates the attributes of the at least one file as requested by the device.

27.       The method of claim 26, in which the at least one file to be authenticated was received by the device as a file transfer from another device.

10       28.       The method of claim 26, in which an identification of at least one of the device or user of the device is transferred along with attributes of the at least one file to be authenticated.

15       29.       The method of claim 26, in which the unique digital characterization comprises digitally signing the confirmation receipt.

20       30.       The method of claim 26, in which the confirmation receipt incorporates at least the date and time of authentication, and an identification of at least the requesting device.

25       31.       The method of claim 26, in which the unique digital characterization of file attributes comprises authentication by a postal authority.